
BOOK REVIEWS

History of the Disorders of Cardiac Rhythm (Second Revised and Updated Printing)

Lüderitz B. 171 pp. Armonk, New York: Futura Publishing Company, Inc., 1998. US \$60. ISBN 0-87993-606-1

This handsomely produced book is written by an eminent European cardiologist. It is organized in a fascinating series of vignettes that are easy to read and pleasant to digest (intellectually) at any pace one may choose. The richly illustrated chronological history—with its narrative description of the times, and of the inventions and contributions of historically important figures—is particularly engaging. Interspersed throughout the history are brief biographical sketches of the giants upon whose shoulders we now stand to see into the future.

Every serious cardiologist has a personal pantheon of heroes, and I have my own. As any suspicious reader might do, I looked for omissions in Lüderitz's pantheon. But I must confess that he has chosen wisely from a field in which such a choice is difficult. I particularly liked Lüderitz's decision to begin the book with "pulse theory"; I continue to be impressed with the practical value of this subject. As cardiologists, we sometimes get carried away with the latest bells and whistles, slipping to an unfortunate distance from the patient, both physically and intellectually. Holding the hand and wrist of someone who has come to you for help and reassurance is not only symbolic, but it measurably enhances your clinical effectiveness. The belief that the ancients had too little else to offer is a foolish modern conceit. The ancients used what they had, and I am

not sure that today we balance what we have as wisely.

Understandably, the book has a European perspective. This is completely appropriate, because Europe is not only the author's home, but it was for so long the heart and soul of cardiology. In fact, Lüderitz is most generous in his inclusion of cardiologists from the new world and the Orient.

On a personal note, I was gratified to see the James fibers described and illustrated on pages 53, 69, and 70. I am puzzled when I think of how often today's electrophysiologists draw schematic diagrams to explain their understanding of reentrant rhythms—which originate in precisely this region of the heart—without making any mention of the anatomic substrate that exists there. I must also acknowledge with gratitude the eponymous tribute by my friend and colleague, the late great Maurice Lev.¹

This book will make an attractive and valuable addition to any cardiologist's library. It is as delightful to read as it is informative and, as Douglas Zipes suggests in his foreword, it offers a treasure trove of references on the subject.

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References

1. Lev M, Fox SM 3d, Bharati S, Greenfield JC Jr, Rosen KM, Pick A. Mahaim and James fibers as a basis for a unique variety of ventricular preexcitation. *Am J Cardiol* 1975;36: 880-8.

Congenital Heart Disease Visualized: Echocardiography with Pathology Correlation (CD-ROM)

*Girish S. Shirali, Frank Lombano, Daniel Dyar,
Ranae L. Larsen, Debra L. Kearney, J. Timothy
Bricker. Armonk, New York: Futura Publishing
Company, Inc., 1997. US \$225.*

The objective of this CD-ROM is to enable anyone with a multimedia computer to view echocardiographic images and related anatomic specimens that illustrate major forms of congenital heart dis-

ease. This valuable application of CD-ROM educational technology uses QuickTime software to display dynamic echocardiograms, along with static and dynamically manipulated pathologic specimens. With this interactive program, viewers can thoroughly examine aspects of cardiac anatomy and pathology that are necessary for understanding and interpreting pediatric echocardiograms. Because viewers can proceed at their own pace and at their desired level of detail, the learning process is simple and pleasant. The program is easy to install and use on Macintosh systems and on computers that run Microsoft Windows 3.1, Windows NT 3.5, or Windows 95. The CD includes a table of contents fea-